

Courier



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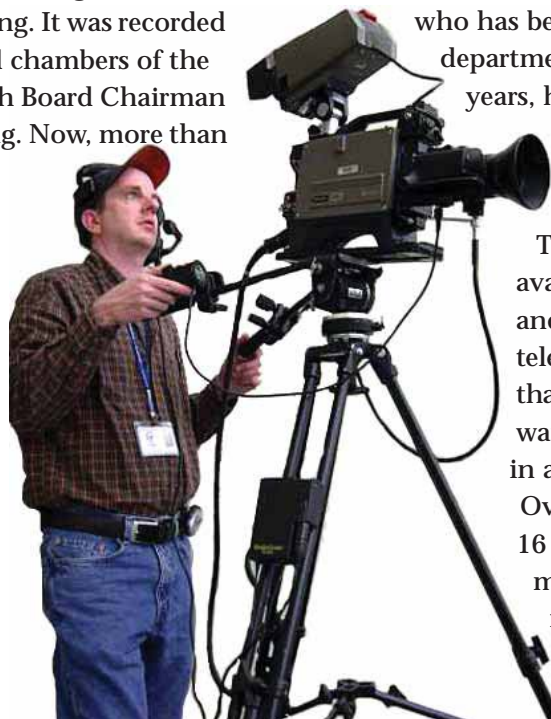
Cable Channel 16

20 years of success

On Sept. 10, 1984, the new Fairfax County Government Channel 16 premiered its programming with the Board of Supervisors meeting. It was recorded live out of the board chambers of the Massey building with Board Chairman Jack Herrity presiding. Now, more than 20 years have passed and Channel 16 has become an essential way for the county government to communicate with its residents and employees, not only with recorded programs but with live cablecasting throughout the county. "Going live brought our viewers right into the situation as it was happen-

ing," said Gail Eskew, acting director of the Department of Cable Communications and Consumer Protection. Eskew, who has been a part of the department for more than 21 years, has a good understanding of this powerful communications form.

Today, Channel 16 is available on both Cox and Comcast cable television where more than 257,000 homes watch local government in action as it happens. Over the years, Channel 16 has become much more than the visual record of the Board of Supervisors. "We are a fully maintained



Steve Adams, media technician

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FCCCC 2004 Campaign extended

Due to the late arrival of campaign materials for this year's drive, the Fairfax County Combined Charitable Campaign will be extended until Nov. 12. If you have not received your pledge form, please contact Margaret Savage at 703-324-3357, TTY 703-222-7314, or by e-mail and the information will be sent to you quickly.

This year will be especially difficult on our young and senior citizens because of the unexpected shortage of the flu vaccines. There may be a greater demand on medical resources from those who are served by the United Way organizations.

Many organizations depend on this annual campaign as the single source for their funding, but you know that. You also know how important it is to support the FCCCC. Making a difference in the lives of others is what county employee do so well. Think about what you can give up for a dollar a week, then watch what your dollar can do. ■

Since 1989, Channel 16 has received 66 first place awards and more than 150 awards and recognitions in other categories.

Here is the award-winning team from cable Channel 16 that makes it happen.

Cable, from page 1

production facility with the equipment and professional staff that is the envy of many local governments,” said Michael Liberman, production manager.

The cable system is funded from fees paid by Comcast and Cox Cable for the county franchise. However, the department prepares and justifies its annual budget like other county agencies. “We compete for funds and resources as would any other county agency,” said Eskew, “helping to assure that we operate efficiently and effectively. Our operation does not impact the county’s General Fund.”

Eskew also cited the opportunity of working with agencies and citizens to develop programs. “The professionals here provide the technical expertise to put together our programs, but it’s people like our county employees in the various agencies that have such good stories to tell. We truly exemplify a team effort in presenting programs that are interesting and informative to our audiences. And we can’t do that without the help of many employees in county departments.”

Some of the programs Channel 16 produces include the popular monthly “County Magazine” that shows events and activities in the county. “Developing programs that have an impact on our viewers give us great pride,” said Eskew. Other programs, such as “Parks Plus”

and “Consumer Focus,” have come to be popular winners as well.

And when winners are mentioned, cable Channel 16 stands out in the county. Since 1989, Channel 16 has received 66 first place awards, and more than 150 awards and recognitions in other categories. Channel 16 has twice been named the best government access channel in the country.

The division also broadcasts the Fairfax County Training Network to provide training programs for county employees. Here, employees can tune to Channel 40 and receive a variety of programs that improve their skills or inform them of various projects. New this year is “Connect with the County Exec,” an opportunity to have a televised phone and e-mail interactive county-wide staff meeting for all employees.

Another important mission of Channel 16 is emergency communications. Through Channel 16, commercial channel overrides and bulletin boards, the cable connection is a critical communications link to the county’s staff and residents in times of emergency situations. “County employees should know that Channel 16 will carry the most up to date information in the event of an emergency or crisis situation provided by the Office of Public Affairs,” said Eskew. Information on Channel 16 relates specifi-

cally to Fairfax County and is not edited by commercial venues to fit broader locales.

So what does the future hold for the cable channel? “We’re moving into so many new things that will improve the way we communicate with our audiences,” said Eskew, pointing out that county information is now available globally through video streaming. “In the next 20 years, we probably won’t recognize ourselves,” she smiled.

Please join the staff for a lunch hour showing of the 20th anniversary video of Channel 16, from noon to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 3, in the Board Auditorium. ■



Frequently asked questions on open enrollment

Fairfax County employees can make changes to their benefits now during open enrollment. Here are some frequently asked questions that can help you with your decision. But remember – open enrollment ends Nov. 15.

General

Q: If I don't do anything, will I still have the same benefits in 2005?

A: You will for health insurance, group term life and limited term disability insurance. You will not have dental coverage in 2005 unless you enroll in the new plan. You also must sign up for medical spending and dependent care accounts every year. Use the online Web site to enroll in the dental plan and the flexible spending accounts.

Q: I am already enrolled in long term care. Do I need to elect it during open enrollment?

A: No. But employees who do not have the plan may apply at anytime. Your application must be submitted with medical evidence if you apply after your initial 60-day benefits eligibility period. Call Tram Nguyen at 703-324-3437, TTY 703-222-7314, for an enrollment kit.

Using the Benelogic Web site

Q: I can't get into Benelogic – how do I sign in?

A: Your user name is the same as your PRISM ID – typically your first initial and the first 5 letters of your last name. Some last names may use a number. Your password for the initial sign-on is set for the last four digits of your SSN.

Q: I changed my password in Benelogic and now I can't get back in. How do I get it reset?

A: To have your Benelogic password reset, e-mail HRBenefits or call the Benefits Division at 703-324-4917, TTY 703-222-7314.

Q: How do I remove my dependents using the online system?

A: To remove a dependent, you must first delete the check mark next to the dependent's name on the medical screen page and the group term life insurance page, if applicable. Then click the change arrow next to the dependent's name (either from the review election page or dependent list page) and then select "remove."

Group Term Life Insurance

Q: I currently have 3x salary for group term life coverage (basic + 2 times optional) and I

would like to increase my coverage to 5x salary (basic + 4 x optional). What do I need to do?

A: Since you already have the maximum coverage available (basic + 2 x salary), you are guaranteed an additional 1 x salary during open enrollment. Just click 4 x salary, including basic coverage in Benelogic. To apply for the additional 1 x salary optional coverage, you will need to complete an evidence of insurability (EOI) form and the group term life open enrollment form. Submit both forms to Benefits, DHR. (Both forms are accessible through Benelogic by clicking the forms link on the left shaded panel.) When DHR is notified by the vendor of your approval, staff will increase your coverage. Note: Optional coverage is guaranteed up to \$325,000. Some employees will not qualify for the additional, guaranteed coverage of 1 x salary if their optional coverage exceeds the \$325,000 limit. Affected employees will need to complete the forms and submit them to Benefits, DHR.

Q: I only have basic + 1 times optional and would like to increase my coverage to basic + 2 times optional. What do I need to do?

A: You will not make the requested change in Benelogic because your coverage needs to be approved before it is entered in the system. You will need to complete both the evidence of insurability (EOI) and group term life open enrollment forms and submit them to DHR. When DHR is notified by the vendor of your approval, staff will increase your coverage. All employees requesting optional coverage will need to go through underwriting except for employees who currently have the maximum available (basic + 2 times salary) and are only requesting the guaranteed, additional 1x salary (basic + 3 times salary). Note: Coverage is guaranteed up to \$325,000.

Q: What is the maximum coverage amount for optional group term life?

A: The maximum is \$500,000. ■

Detailed information on your benefits can be seen online at <http://infoweb/hr/benefits>



Trick or Treat – and more

Somehow, when Halloween rolls around, our interest in ghosts and the supernatural begins to peak. Now, this isn't just those cute little ghosts and goblins that show up at your door and are easily pacified with a few pieces of candy. No, many of the ghosts and supernatural phenomena we experience are much more serious – we think.

Fairfax County, probably because of so much historical activity, is rich in supernatural legends. People sometimes see ghosts of the Seneca and Necostin Indians wandering around previously wooded areas in the northern parts of Reston. There have been occasional sightings of what is believed to be the ghost of Lord Fairfax, riding at will over his vast estate where many of us now live. Of course, the Civil War spawned its share of ghosts in this area, often reported to be seen in bloody battle gear. Some people have even reported seeing a headless rider galloping back and forth on Braddock Road!

Fairfax County's historic houses often hold one or more ghosts. Sully Plantation house, now included in the Sully Historic Site, was once owned by Richard Bland Lee, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. It is said his ghost sometimes visits his well-maintained homestead and takes the blame for

often unexplained occurrences and sounds. Woodlawn Plantation, a gift from George Washington to his foster daughter, has turned reported "hauntings" into

a wonderful candlelight tour of haunted history. The tours are Oct. 28 – 30; \$15 per person; reservations: 703-780-4000, x27, TTY 711.

For many years, Walney House on Centreville Road has been reported to be haunted. Here was the famous "bleeding wall" which legend says resulted from a Civil War soldier being slain against the wall.

Not all supernatural occurrences are ghosts, according to the staff of the Virginia Room of the Fairfax County Public Library. Strange sounds, unexplained occurrences, like failed or changing mechanical systems or a sudden drop in temperature – and just the eerie feeling that there is a presence nearby are examples of the supernatural that people claim to have experienced. The Virginia Room is a wonderful source to learn about this area's historical events, including ghostly workings.

Why do ghosts haunt an area anyway? Some say they warn people of doom or approaching danger. Sometimes, ghosts tell us of something that happened in a previous life. Or some ghosts return to avenge a crime or pay for a wrong they did. Overall, strange occurrences are often explained by ghostly traits, lending to their legends and continuing the possible sightings. A good example is the Legend of the Bunny Man.

It seems that the Bunny Man is a figure clad in a white bunny suit and often threatening people with an ax. Although sightings of Bunny Man have been in Maryland and the District, his main haunt has been the area surrounding a railroad overpass near Fairfax Station. This is an example of an urban legend that has grown in the last 25 years. People still inquire about Bunny Man, and his stories are still told around scout campfires and sleep-overs.

So, while Halloween is a time for fun, it's also a time we look for the supernatural activities that may be around us all year long. Perhaps this would explain many of the bizarre things that happen to us, wouldn't it? ■



Who are these people who only come out once a year?

You're fired!

Those are the dreaded words Jenny Ma, an employee with the Department of Information Technology, never hopes to hear. Ma, who's been with the agency for 16 years, isn't worried about her own job, but rather her daughter's. You see, her daughter, Ivana Ma, is a contestant on the reality TV show "The Apprentice."

Jenny Ma's own experience with the county has taught her a few things about leadership. Donald Trump's dictatorial approach would never work here, Ma said. She believes the county's participatory, democratic style works well for its 11,000-plus employees.

Ma joined DIT after a stint as a Chinese language teacher. Born in mainland China and raised in Taiwan, she arrived in the U.S. because she had won a scholarship to the University of Arkansas. Ma started the university's first Chinese language program. While there, she earned a master's degree in German.

After moving because of her husband's job, Ma decided she needed to make a career change herself. Teaching foreign languages, especially Chinese, wasn't practical. "It was time to forget about human languages and learn computer languages," said Ma, who then got a degree in computer science.

These days she manages two databases, the DB2 and SQL systems. The DB2 system contains the Police Management System that stores criminal records, warrants that have been issued and more. Ma says the county is a wonderful place to work. After so many years, it's her coworkers that make her job enjoyable.

What does Ma think about Ivana's career choice? She says her daughter, who is a successful venture capitalist, is a very good businesswoman — whether Donald Trump eventually agrees or not. ■

- by Brian Worthy, OPA



Jenny Ma

Police officers to elect new trustee

The Fairfax County Police Officers Retirement System will have a vacancy on its Board of Trustees effective Jan. 1, 2005. The position is a four year term and will be filled by election from the active membership.

The elected Board member will attend monthly meetings of the Board and work closely with other county retirement boards, the Board of Supervisors Personnel Committee and various other county agencies. These interrelationships often require additional monthly meetings. The Board of Trustees administers a retirement system with more than 1,300 active members and 700 retirees, and having an asset base in excess of \$680 million.

Larry A. Swartz, executive director, Retirement Administration Agency, 10680 Main Street, Suite 280, Fairfax, VA 22032, is now accepting nominations for the upcoming

vacancy. Members may nominate themselves. Nominations must be received by 4 p.m. on Nov. 19. Any questions regarding the nomination procedure or the duties of the office may be directed to Swartz or Philip R. Langham, retirement administrator, at 703-279-8200, TTY 711. In addition, you may contact the Retirement Board president, First Lieutenant Erin Flaherty Schaible at the Police Department at 703-246-2564, TTY 711.

Pre-printed postage paid ballots will be mailed to the home address of all active members of the Police Officers Retirement System at the close of the nomination process. Biographies/statements will be printed and distributed on all ballots. Ballots must be received back at the Retirement Agency by close of business Dec. 16. The winner will be notified Dec. 20 and the new trustee will take office Jan. 1. ■



**Your health
is in your
hands**

Get through flu season without getting shot

With influenza (flu) season upon us and flu vaccines in short supply, the need to reduce the spread of germs is high. While not everyone will receive a flu vaccine this season, the Health Department would like to remind you that ***your health is in your hands***. Here are some things you can do to help prevent flu and other viral illnesses:

- ♦ Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- ♦ Ideally, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
- ♦ Discard used tissues immediately and wash your hands.
- ♦ Wash your hands frequently throughout the day, especially before eating and after using the bathroom.
- ♦ Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with

soap and hot (or warm) water.

- ♦ If you get sick, stay home from school or work to prevent spreading germs to others.
- ♦ Avoid crowded public areas, especially if you are considered at a higher risk for medical complications of flu.

Most people who get the flu will feel sick for a week or two and then fully recover. What's more, the flu can be treated with anti-viral medication, but it's only effective if received at the early stages of the disease.

To get more information about influenza, including vaccines, symptoms, and the difference between the flu and a cold, visit the Health Department Web site at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd or call 703-246-2411, TTY 703-591-6435. ■

- by Kimberly Cordero, Health Department

Fairfax deputy sheriffs pull plane to victory to benefit Special Olympics

The Fairfax County Sheriff's Office claimed first place in the 12th Annual Plane Pull to benefit Special Olympics Virginia, which was held on Sept. 18 at Dulles International Airport. The 20-man team pulled the 150,000 pound FedEx jet across the finish line in a record time of 5.83 seconds, beating the second place team by over a full second. Weighing in at 4,970 pounds, the Fairfax Sheriff's contin-

marks the third time in four years that the Sheriff's Office has won the trophy.

The Plane Pull is the centerpiece attraction of the annual Dulles Day Festival, with all proceeds going to Special Olympics. This year the event attracted thousands of spectators despite early morning wind and rain, leftovers of Hurricane Ivan. Dulles Airport had been closed briefly the night before as several tornados ripped through the area. The hardy fans were treated to a very entertaining day, with the outcome of the competition in doubt until the very end. Over 40 teams competed in the Plane Pull, raising more than \$90,000 for Special Olympics Virginia.

Sheriff Stan Barry is proud of the members of his agency who take the time and effort to assist others in our community who are less fortunate. The Sheriff's Department remains committed to Special Olympics Virginia and all that it represents. ■

- by Deputy Sheriff Tony Shobe

No wonder the plane didn't have a chance when pulled across the tarmac by this team from the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office. Congratulations to the winners! - photo provided by the event staff.



gent was the largest, as well as the strongest team entered in the competition. This year's event

Briefs**Project SUCCESS collecting boxes for military support**

The Department of Community and Recreation Services' Therapeutic Recreation Division is looking for about 100 copy paper boxes for its Project SUCCESS. The division has adopted a unit of 150 soldiers serving at Camp Victory in Baghdad, Iraq, and the boxes will be used for an initial mailing of personal care items most needed by our soldiers. Boxes can be delivered to the Pennino Building 10th floor, Therapeutic Recreation section, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Or if you need pick-up for several boxes, call Sara Mumford at 703-324-5587, TTY 703-222-9693.

This worthwhile effort of collecting personal items and copy boxes will continue through the end of the year. This is an excellent holiday project in which your department or agency can participate. Watch the next *Courier* for more information on ways you can support our military personnel serving abroad.

Employee Awards Ceremony

The Employee Awards Ceremony will be held on Friday, Nov. 19, at 10 a.m. in the Government Center Forum. Suggestion, Outstanding Performance, Team Excellence and Managerial Excellence Awards will be presented by County Executive Tony Griffin, Board Chairman Gerald E. Connolly and Supervisor Penny Gross. All employees are invited to cheer on coworkers and fellow employees as they are recognized for their good work. The ceremony will be shown live on the Fairfax County Training Network for those who are unable to attend. If you have questions, please contact Bob Fitzpatrick, DHR, 703-324-3306, TTY 703-222-7314.

November is Adoption Awareness Month

Adoption Awareness Month will host several activities to focus on this important issue. On Friday, Nov. 12, 6 p.m. in the Government Center Forum, everyone is invited to hear the astounding story of Rev. W.C. Martin of Possum Trot, Texas. (that's right...Possum Trot!) whose motto is, "There is no such thing as an unwanted child, only unfound families." He and the people of Possum Trot have adopted 70 children since 1997. His inspiring comments will be combined with the outstanding Gospel Music Festival. Put this on your calendar now! For more information, contact Beverly Howard, DFS, 703-324-7518, TTY 711.

Investing in Communities program for small businesses

Fairfax County recently announced its new Investing in Communities Program. ICP can help small businesses grow through renovation,

expansion or new equipment. Financing from \$10,000 to \$500,000 is available, in combination with other private funds, to improve building facades; acquire, rehabilitate or construct property or buy equipment. Approximately \$2,400,000 is currently available in funding for ICP.

Fairfax County's new revitalization Web site, located at www.fcrcv.org, promotes the seven Fairfax County Revitalization locations: Bailey's Crossroads and Seven Corners in Annandale, Lake Anne in Reston, McLean, Merrifield, Richmond Highway and Springfield.

A business card sized CD with more program information and an application is available to small businesses and developers by contacting the Fairfax County Office of Revitalization at 703-246-5171, TTY 703-385-3578. ■

Online classified are great!
<https://infoweb.fairfaxcounty.gov/classifieds/>

Holiday schedule

2004

Thursday	Nov. 11	Veteran's Day
Thursday, Friday	Nov. 25 & 26	Thanksgiving Break
Thursday	Dec. 23	Half day for Christmas Eve
Friday	Dec. 24	Christmas Break
Friday	Dec. 31	New Year's

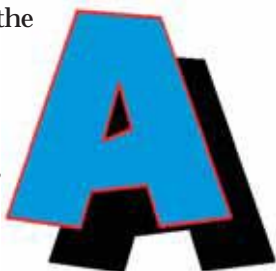
2005

Monday	Jan. 17	M.L. King, Jr. Day
Thursday	Jan. 20	Inauguration Day
Monday	Feb. 21	Washington's Day
Monday	May 30	Memorial Day
Monday	July 4	Independence Day
Monday	Sept. 5	Labor Day
Monday	Oct. 10	Columbus Day
Friday	Nov. 11	Veteran's Day
Thursday, Friday	Nov. 24 & 25	Thanksgiving Break
Friday	Dec. 23	Half day for Christmas Eve
Monday	Dec. 26	Christmas Break



How did the county end up with extra money at the end of the year and what happens to it?

According to the Department of Management and Budget, Fairfax County, by law, cannot over expend its budget.



Therefore, there is always some type of balance at year-end. The county ended FY 2004 with a balance of \$48.66 million due to careful budget management as well as the improving economy, which resulted in additional revenue. This balance was less than 2 percent of total FY 2004 General Fund Disbursements. With additional revenue of \$2.71 million projected for FY 2005, the Board of Supervisors had an available amount of \$51.37 million to consider as part of the FY 2004 Carryover Review.

After careful consideration, the Board chose to invest approximately 50 percent of the available balance to address immediate pressing needs that support the county's strategic goals, while prudently setting aside the other 50 percent for future requirements such as tax relief for FY 2006, the Revenue Stabilization Fund (a rainy day reserve), computer and bus replacement for the schools, public improvements at Jefferson Manor, and a reserve for environmental projects. More details on these expenditures and reserves can be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/news/2004/04256.htm and the full FY 2004 Carryover package can be accessed at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dmb/quarter/carryover.htm. ■

Security & Safety Matters

Halloween safety tips

Halloween is a cherished tradition for adults and children alike. Using safety tips and common sense can help you make the most of your Halloween celebration.

Costume design:

- ♦ Costumes should be made with light-colored materials and with strips of reflective tape used to increase visibility. Only fire-retardant materials should be used for costumes.
 - ♦ Costumes should be loose so warm clothes can be worn underneath with comfortable sturdy shoes.
 - ♦ Costumes should not be so long that they become a tripping hazard.
 - ♦ Masks may obstruct a child's vision. Use facial make-up instead.
 - ♦ Knives, swords and other accessories should be made from cardboard or flexible materials. Do not allow children to carry sharp objects.
- Parents:
- ♦ Plan and discuss the route trick-or-treaters intend to follow.
 - ♦ Provide flashlights to help children see better and be seen more clearly.
 - ♦ Make sure that an adult or an older responsible youth will be supervising the outing.

♦ Teach children to stop only at houses or apartment buildings that are well-lit and to never enter a stranger's home.

♦ Instruct children to walk from house to house, as crossing yards and lawns where unseen objects or the uneven terrain may present tripping hazards.

♦ Insist that treats be brought home for inspection before anything is eaten.

♦ Throw out anything that appears tampered with and take away treats that may not be age-appropriate.

Motorists:

♦ Enter and exit driveways and alleys carefully.

♦ Watch for children darting out from between parked cars.

♦ Watch for children walking on roadways, medians and curbs.

For additional information on Halloween safety, please contact Robert Johnson, safety analyst, Risk Management Division, Department of Finance, at 703-324-3043, TTY 711, or by e-mail to robert.johnson@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Vote and Volunteer

The Electoral Board still needs volunteers on Nov. 2 to help count absentee ballots in the Government Center. Contact Margaret Luca, 703-324-4734, TTY 711, if you can help. And don't forget to vote!

<http://infoweb/courier>

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